



KINSHIP CHRONICLES

SUMMER SAFETY TIPS FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Submitted by Sandra Leonard, DHR Division of Public Health

Keeping your grandchildren safe may seem like a full-time job, and at times it will be. However, by establishing good safety practices this summer, you are not only setting a good example, but you are protecting your grandchildren from potential harm.

The following are tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

FUN IN THE SUN:

- Wear lightweight clothing, and a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses
- Avoid direct sun exposure, specially between 10:00am and 3:00pm

HEAT STRESS IN CHILDREN

- Never leave your child unattended in the car. Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach over 140 degrees in minutes
- Make sure your grandchild is hydrated, drinks plenty of water before a sporting event or prolonged physical activity

POOL SAFETY

- All pools should have a fence 4-feet high around the pool

- The fence should not have openings that a young child could get into

BICYCLE SAFETY

- Always make sure they wear a correctly fitting helmet. When buying a helmet, look for the label inside that says the helmet meets CPSC safety standards

LAWN MOWER SAFETY

- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers
- Use a mower with a control that stops moving forward if the handle is released

CLIFF'S NOTES: CAREGIVER UPDATES

Submitted by Cliff Burt, DHR, Division of Aging Services

From the National Center on Caregiving: Study: *Does High Caregiver Stress Lead to Nursing Home Entry?*

A study for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Plan-

ning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, released "how informal care, paid formal care, and stress or burden experienced by caregivers relates to nursing home placement". The

study found that the more stress a family caregiver experienced, the more likely the care recipient would end up going to a nursing home.

For more information: visit: <http://www.os.dhhs.gov/>

May 2007

Spring Issue 2007

Next Issue: July 2007

Special Points of Interest:

- ⊙ Legal Advice for Grandparents
- ⊙ Office of Child Support Helps Grandparents
- ⊙ Caregiver Updates
- ⊙ Area Agency on Aging Support Groups

Inside This Issue:

- Getting to the Heart of a Kinship Care Support Group 2
- Kinship Care In the Georgia Mountains 2
- Confessions of a Relative Caregiver Coordinator 2
- Four Important Documents for Relative Caregivers 3
- Snack Tips 3
- Child Support Services Hero of the Month Helps Grand- 3
- Golden Nuggets of Wisdom 4

GETTING TO THE HEART OF A KINSHIP CARE SUPPORT GROUP

Submitted by Kerrie Sirmans, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Area Agency on Aging

Support groups are standard practice in the fields of social services to provide an outlet for people to come together, share their experiences, learn new ways to cope and to reduce stress. The goals of the “GRAND GATHERING” support groups in Heart of Georgia Altamaha AAA region reflect this ideology.

There are three support groups currently available to grandparents raising grandchildren— Appling county, Wayne county and one at

the Toombs Central Elementary School in collaboration with their school counselor. These groups highlight topics such as resources available, coping strategies, and stress reduction, to name a few. It also provides relative caregivers an opportunity to just talk about their experiences and socialize. Grandparents have frequently mentioned feeling alone in their struggles, so it is a comfort to attend a “GRAND GATHERING” and find out they are not alone.

We have a saying that maintains the focus of the groups during our “GRAND GATHERINGS”- “In union there is strength.” The grandparents of the Heart of GA region will certainly be strong with the help of each other.

It has helped me to the fact, that after I have gone to a group, I feel less depressed.

—Ms. S. a Heart of GA Altamaha GRAND GATHERING support group member

KINSHIP CARE IN THE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS

Submitted by: Julia Jessie, Legacy Link, Inc. Area Agency on Aging

Kinship care support groups in Rabun, Habersham, Lumpkin and Forsyth counties continue to amaze me. They are the epitome of what sharing groups are all about. The participants are taking ownership of the meetings and embracing new members with open arms.

Many grandparents moved to the GA Mountain area upon retirement to be

near children and grandchildren with the intent of becoming weekend grandparents. Needless to say, they have been called upon to become full-time caregivers for their grandchildren. As new resident/retirees to the area, they are now quickly learning from local residences of the support groups where they can find the best resources, like which counseling facilities accept

Medicaid, who are the best counselors, and the best places to take children for hiking or picnics.

The vast amount of information shared between these grandparents is incredible. All reports they are in a better position to deal with every day problems just in knowing there is someone else they can call on for help.

CONFESSIONS OF A RELATIVE CAREGIVER COORDINATOR

Submitted by: Irma Garcia Rose, Grands Who Care , A program of Mercy Senior Care in Rome

Last week, my co-worker and I went to the nursing home to visit one of our clients from Grands Who Care. Let me tell you about her. She has been raising her granddaughter since birth. Her granddaughter has been growing as expected of a child, to become a beautiful, intelligent, and according to the grandmother, very talkative teenager. At a particular support group meeting,

issues arose surrounding how to tell their grandchildren about their biological parents. The grandmother opened up and shared her fear about her granddaughter not loving her if she knew the truth. It took many talks and individual counseling sessions before the grandmother was able to tell her granddaughter that she was adopted. Two Christmases ago, the

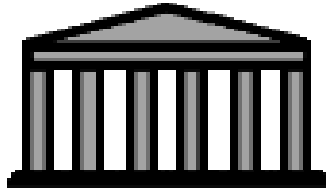
grandmother called excited and crying that her granddaughter still loves her after she told her she was adopted.

Standing by her bed in the nursing home, I was reminded of all of these conversations and realized once more how much I have learned from her about love and family commitment.

FOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS EVERY RELATIVE CAREGIVER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Submitted by Lindsay Verity, Atlanta Legal Aid Society Grandparents/Relative Caregiver Project

At the Atlanta Legal Aid Society's Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project, one of the most common concerns is what happens when a relative caregiver is no longer able to raise the children in their care. Drafting some important documents now can help relieve some of their worries. While the relative caregiver is still alive, there are four important documents that can ensure



The Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project is a component of Atlanta Legal Aid Society

his or her wishes are carried out.

1. **Financial Power of Attorney**—permits the caregiver to choose an agent to manage all of their financial and property matters in the case they are unable to.
2. **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**—the caregiver chooses someone to make health care decisions for the caregiver when he or she is unable to do so.

3. **Living Will**—states whether the caregiver wants life sustaining or death delaying treatments to be applied. It allows the caregiver to determine if he or she wishes to discontinue artificial life support (such as a respirator)
4. **Standby Guardianship**—gives legal authority to someone else to care for the child. If the relative caregiver has adopted the child and is still living, the caregiver has the right to name a guardian to care for the child in the event the caregiver cannot care for the child.

SNACK TIPS FOR YOU AND YOUR GRANDCHILD

Information provided from Centers for Disease Control, Fruits and Veggies Matter Website

Adopted from www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/tips website, consider the following helpful snack tips:

- Try hummus and whole wheat pitas
- Encourage your child to choose his or her own fruit when shopping
- Try baked tortilla chips with black bean and corn salsa
- Look for fruit without added sugar or syrups
- Store cleaned, cut-up veggies in the fridge at eye level and keep low-fat dip on hand
- Pick up ready-packed salad greens from the produce shelf for a quick and easy snack anytime
- Drink a fruit smoothie with whole fruit, ice cubes and low-fat or fat-free yogurt

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES HERO OF THE MONTH NOMINEE HELPS GRANDPARENTS

Submitted by Sheila Brown, DHR, Office of Child Support Services

In April, a grandmother came in the office with her two grandsons ages 9 and 7. They had been living with their grandparents after being abandoned by their mother when the youngest was 2; their father was currently in jail. The grandparents had not applied for any services to help care for the children because they were afraid the state would remove them from their care. Anita assured them OCSS only wanted to help them and not take their grandchildren away. Anita assisted in the application process by completing all parts she could (the grandfather could not read or write) Anita also assisted with getting the children donated toys during Easter



Anita Janes, Establishment Agent in the Gainesville office has been with Child Support Services for 10 years.

from OCSS staff. The two grandchildren loved their toys. Efforts are still being made to provide further assistance to the grandfather and the grandsons. The grandfather has been referred to other agencies for other resources, but has not yet applied for OCSS assistance; he is still scared of “government agencies.”

Department of Human Resources (DHR)
Division of Aging Services
9th Floor
2 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 657-5258



The Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Aging Services administers a state-wide system of services for senior citizens, their families and caregivers. We work with other aging agencies and organizations to effectively and efficiently respond to the needs of elderly Georgians. DAS meets the challenge of Georgia's growing older population through continued service improvement and innovation.

The Division of Aging Services vision is to assist older Georgians in Living Longer, Living Safely, Living Well.

GOLDEN NUGGETS OF WISDOM FROM GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Submitted by: Leslie M. Sessley, DHR, Division of Aging Services

Over the past two years I have been with the DHR, Division of Aging Services, there are “golden nuggets of wisdom” that I learned through speaking with grandparents and other relatives raising children.

Here are a few lessons I picked up and would like to share with relative caregivers:

- **Do not underestimate the power in small numbers.** It does not take a lot of people to start a “power house.” You do have the power to make a difference in your life and your grandchildren’s lives, but it is up to you.
- **If one person has a dream, two or more can make it happen.** Don’t be afraid to share your passions and desires for your family

with other relative caregivers. You may find out that other people may share the same goals you have when it comes to raising your grandchildren.

- **Find a connection.** Get “plugged in” and find resources that will help you. Use resources that you are familiar with so that you may find support. Newspapers, TV, schools, malls, an healthcare facilities may help.
- **It is healthy to ask for help when needed.** Once you get connected, you may find that just talking over problems in a supportive place may

be helpful to you and your grandchild. Support groups or professional counseling may be of assistance.



- **Allow others to share their love to you, as you have done for the children in your care.** What you have done is out of love and concern for your grandchildren. This is very commendable, but also allow someone to

show you the same love and concern. You also deserve love given by others through acts of support and assistance.